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The study was instigated to demonstrate that a program for gifted children could be effectively administered in rural areas. Five school districts developed special classes for gifted children according to conditions within the school. Five other districts in the same rural Ohio County began special groupings for enriched subjects taught several times during the week.

Identification of the gifted children was made through intelligence tests, achievement tests, teacher observation, evaluation by peers and self-evaluation. Teachers were selected for high ability and interest. These teachers received special in-service training.

As a result of the evaluations of the two-year demonstration project, certain generalizations were made. The classroom teacher is the key to a successful program. An all-county workshop in developing the program was a major factor of the program's success. A clear statement of specific goals should precede the establishment of the program though no single plan is practical on a county-wide basis. Extension of the program was considered in the areas of a stronger psychological staff, early admissions to kindergarten, better program planning, and the fostering of better attitudes and cooperation. Interest was aroused throughout the schools and community as well as surrounding districts.

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A Demonstration Project for Gifted County Elementary School Children

AS IF THE CHART WERE GIVEN

Issued by E. E. Holt,
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Columbus, Ohio 1963

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I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

—EMILY DICKINSON

As If The Chart Were Given

Report of A Demonstration Project for Gifted County Elementary School Children

WALTER B. BARBE, *Project Coordinator*

PORTAGE COUNTY, *Kent State University*

Prepared under the direction of
R. A. Horn, *Director*
Division of Special Education
Columbus, Ohio
1963

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Foreword

More and more attention is being given to the education of the gifted. This attention, however, is directed toward providing a better education not for the gifted alone, but for all children. Much effort and research has been directed toward the gifted child in the city school system, but less attention has been given to the gifted child in the county school system.

This publication, *As If The Chart Were Given*, is the report of a demonstration project with county elementary school children who were identified as gifted. The Project clearly indicated that gifted children can be provided for in other than urban areas. The demonstration type project, which this report presents, is the implementation of what we have found out about gifted children. It serves the double purpose of demonstrating what we already know about gifted children as well as providing additional information.

The program in Ohio for gifted children has received widespread acclaim. The extensive list of publications assures those working in the field that the information which they are gathering will be widely disseminated.

R. A. Horn, *Director*
Division of Special Education
Ohio Department of Education

Project Staff

Walter B. Barbe, Project Coordinator

Fred P. Doseck, Supervisor

Myron E. Wirick, Supervisor

Norman Chambers, Research Assistant

Mrs. Margaret Betzhold, Administrative Assistant

Lee W. Grimsley, Superintendent, Portage County Schools

Clayton M. Schindler, Dean, College of Education, Kent State University

Thomas M. Stephens, Administrative Assistant, Division of Special Education, Ohio Department of Education

Cover design — Miss Julia Waida, University Editor, Kent State University

Drawings — Raymond Jablonski

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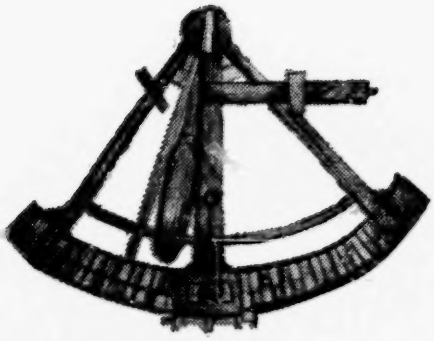
Introduction



The great need for the full development of the abilities of all our children has resulted in more attention to gifted children. Many outstanding programs for the education of gifted children have been developed in large city school systems, but far less attention has been given to gifted children in rural, semi-rural and smaller school districts. This has undoubtedly been due to the smaller numbers of pupils involved, as well as the complexity of special program development for gifted children which would cut across school district lines.

There can be no question but that the needs of gifted children in smaller school systems is as great as those gifted children in large metropolitan areas. While it is true that not all of the answers to the problems of educating gifted children in metropolitan areas have been answered, it can nevertheless be stated with more assurance that some answers have been found for children in metropolitan areas. Programming for gifted children in rural and semi-rural areas has been given so little attention that the need was indeed great for a demonstration project on a county-wide basis.

Description of Portage County

Portage County is located in Northeastern Ohio. It has a population of approximately 91,000 and is largely suburban and semi-rural. Many people have moved into the County because of industry in nearby cities. Located within the County are two cities, Kent and Ravenna. Ravenna, the County seat, has a population of approximately 11,000. Kent, the home of Kent State University, has a population of approximately 17,000. There are numerous small villages in the County, in one of which is Hiram College.

Portage County contains four school systems: Kent City Schools, Ravenna City Schools, Windham Exempted Village Schools, and Portage County Schools. The present Project was conducted only in the elementary schools of the Portage County System. The Portage County School System consists of ten local districts each of which has a high school. There are twenty elementary schools in the county system. These vary in size from about 250 pupils to nearly 1600 pupils and reflect varied organizational patterns—grades one through eight and kindergarten through six being the most frequent.

The total enrollment of the elementary schools is approximately 8,500 pupils. The total elementary school staff consists of nearly 325

professional persons. There is a yearly teacher turnover of more than 25 per cent. Approximately one-third of the teachers have no degree and about one-fifth of them are teaching on temporary certificates. Approximately three per cent of the teachers have masters degrees and a very large number are taking evening classes at Kent State University. More than one-third of the teachers have less than five years experience.

The county staff consists of the county superintendent, a secondary supervisor, an elementary supervisor, an audio-visual director who also works in the area of secondary supervision, a psychologist and guidance director, and an intern psychologist.

Plan of the Project

The Portage County Gifted Child Project was initiated on September 1, 1960 and continued until September 1962, with a grant from the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Special Education. The purposes of the project were:

A. To provide the Division of Special Education of the Ohio Department of Education with information demonstrating what can be accomplished in a county-wide program for gifted elementary children.

B. To determine through adequate evaluation the effectiveness of this program covering one entire Ohio county.

C. To make available to the educators of Ohio information which will be useful in programming for gifted children.

D. To study teacher attitude change on the part of particpating teachers.

No special plans of procedure were developed prior to the beginning of the Project. The main purpose was to develop interest in gifted children, disseminate information about them, aid in the identification of the gifted in the various schools and assist in program development. Specific plans for the gifted were developed in every elementary school in each district in Portage County. These programs varied according to:

A. the needs of the children in each particular school,

B. the special competencies of the staff in each school,

C. the distinctive characteristics of the particular community, and

D. the extent of available testing services.

The staff of the Portage County Gifted Child Project consisted of one half-time coordinator, a part-time graduate student assistant, two full-time supervisors, and a secretary. The Project staff received assistance from the administrative staff of the Portage County Schools, the County supervisors, the County school psychologist and intern, the administration and faculty of Kent State University and the State Supervisor of the Gifted.

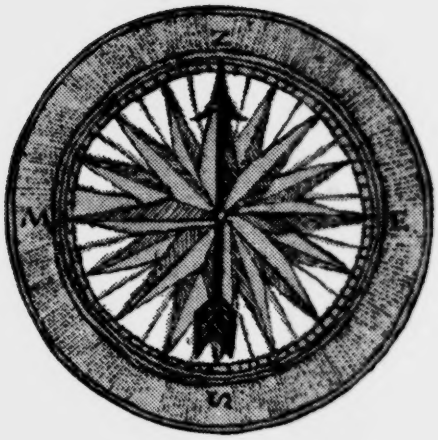
Development of Programs

Of the ten local districts in Portage County, four have committed themselves, with board approval, to full-time special classes for gifted children. Identification procedures have been developed in all of the schools in these four districts. The Project staff worked with the administration, board and teachers of another district, assisting them with the development of a proposal which received board approval.

Special classes were developed in these five districts. One district has a fifth-sixth grade combination, while another has a fourth-fifth-sixth grade combination. A third district will have one third-fourth grade and one fifth-sixth grade combination. Combination grades have been necessary in schools and districts where the school population is smaller and consequently the number of gifted children is limited. In the fourth district there are two classes of gifted children—one at fourth grade level and one at fifth grade level. The fifth district planned three special classes one at the fourth, one at fifth, and one at sixth grade level.

In the remaining five school districts in Portage County, some type of organized program for gifted children has been in operation during the past year in every elementary school. Listed below are the various types of programs:

A. Grouping high ability sixth, seventh and eighth grade students for one period twice a week to study current events.
B. Grouping high achievers in reading in grades four, five and six for enrichment in reading.
C. Saturday classes for selected children in art, taught by community resource people.
D. Spanish lessons twice each week for seventh grade students.
E. Grouping high ability sixth, seventh and eighth grade students for one period twice a week into a seminar on "Democracy."



Identification

There are a variety of ways in which gifted children may be identified. Identification procedures are dependent to a large extent upon the definition of giftedness which is used. Rather than be limited in the Portage County Project to any single definition of giftedness, a conscientious effort was made on the part of the staff to broaden the concept of giftedness beyond that of a single I.Q. score or achievement test score.

An examination of the definitions resulted in the decision that no one was applicable to a program which was county wide. As a beginning point it was necessary to determine some single method of identifying gifted children, but this was done within each school or school district rather than throughout the entire county.

Use of Intelligence Tests

The most common defiinition of giftedness was an I.Q. above a particular point on one or several group tests or a single individual intelligence test. A variety of I.Q. levels have been used throughout the country, from the unrealistic high cut-off point of 150 down to probably an unrealistic low of 115. In several instances in Portage County there was a sincere belief that the I.Q. of 130 was too rigid a cut-off point. This was found to be realistic, due primarily to the limited number of children which would then be admitted to such a program. Generally speaking, higher I.Q.'s were obtained on individual measures of intelligence than were reported on the usual group tests administered in the classroom. Although some additional problems were introduced by this procedure, an I.Q. cut-off on standardized group tests of about 120 appeared to meet the needs when programs were established on the basis of I.Q.

As part of the Portage County Project, programs were set up both on the basis of individual I.Q. tests and on the basis of group I.Q. tests. Ideally, individual test results would be more desirable. The pattern used in the summer demonstration program, in which children were first administered the verbal section of a group I.Q test and those scoring within five points of the cut-off on the individual tests were then administered an individual test, seemed to be the most effective use of the school psychologist's time in administering individual intelligence tests. Administration of an individual I.Q. test to all children in Portage County who were suspected of being above a certain point would have resulted in such extensive testing that the school psychologists would have had

little time for any other duties. It was believed that the administration of some type of screening test, preferably on a verbal basis, resulted in much more effective individual testing later.

Use of Achievement Test Scores

There are numerous problems connected with establishing programs for high achievers. Essentially, it is important that those who develop such programs clearly understand that they are not programs for "gifted children" as such, but are instead programs for children who have been able to achieve at a high level in the traditional program. They should be clearly labeled as such, and not be confused with the gifted programs. Identification for such programs is essentially very easy. Generally speaking, all children who score above grade level on some standardized achievement test are eligible for the special section. Just how far above grade level is usually carefully stipulated, although the reliability of the tests is such that careful drawing of lines has little meaning. Also, in most instances it is known that the standardized achievement test scores at a level considerably higher than the child's actual performance level in the classroom.

The major problem connected with grouping on the basis of achievement is that it brings together children who have been highly successful in the regular program, without consideration as to why these children have been successful. The high achievers are actually the ones upon whom opponents of special grouping base their strongest arguments, and justifiably so. The high achiever is the one who has best fitted into the regular classroom program, been able to achieve at a high level in such a program, and is in danger of being asked to perform above his possible potential level when he is placed with other high achievers.

Another difficulty, of course, is that children are not necessarily equally high in achievement in all areas. A more sensible procedure would be to group them only in those areas in which they are already achieving highly, but not in the areas in which they are not achieving highly. Even this is fraught with difficulties, but is more sensible than "across the board" achievement grouping. This can more readily be done at the high school level than it can at the elementary level.

The biggest objection to grouping on the basis of achievement, without concern for other factors, is that many children who are high

achievers are doing so with maximum expenditure of effort. By placing them in a high achievement group, they are then expected to achieve at a still higher level, which they are sometimes unable to do. It is, of course, true that *many* high achievers also have high ability. It is not true that all high achievers have high ability. Because of the confusion or lack of clarity of goals, in many programs intended for high achievers, children who are achieving at a high level with maximum effort before being placed in the high achievement program are immediately into difficulty because of the false assumption that high achievement immediately implies high ability. Only limited use of this type of grouping was made in the Portage County Project, although it was apparent that a sizeable number of people wanted this kind of grouping.

Combination of High Ability and High Achievement

The establishment of programs for high achievers with high ability can be justified far more easily than establishing a program just for high achievers. It is certainly hoped that always, even within the regular classroom, there will be high achievers. To penalize high achievers, who achieve through the exertion of great effort, by placing them in a class with those of high ability who achieve with less effort, is penalizing the students who have responded most successfully to traditional teaching methods. If a program for gifted children is to be established on the basis of high achievement, the inclusion of some measure of potential ability should also be considered. It must be clearly recognized that a program based on achievement and ability, while better than a program based on achievement alone, is doing nothing for the child of high potential who has not been challenged in the regular school program. That the high achiever with high ability is one kind of giftedness cannot be denied, but the philosophical argument that these are the children who are already doing well in the regular program must be recognized. High ability, high achievement programs are obviously the most successful in terms of their stated goals. To the extent that other provisions are made for the high ability children who are not high achievers, there can be little argument with such programs. If such programs are offered, and the high potential child achieving at a lower level is thereby forgotten, then the high ability high achievement program is endangered.

The approach used in the Portage County Program was to assume that high achievement was expected within any special program, and was

not a prerequisite for admission to it. The prerequisite for admission was high ability, with the goal of the program itself being high achievement.

Use of Teacher Judgment

Teacher judgment of the "gifted" children within a classroom has in the past been somewhat discredited. This was not found to be true in the Portage County Project, when the type of giftedness being sought was described to teachers in terms of classroom performance, either potential or demonstrated. There was demonstration of the fact that the child with language facility, and other indicators of higher cultural exposure, was more readily identifiable. So also was the conforming child more readily identified. But in those situations in which careful description was given of the behavior which would be expected in the special group, teacher judgment was a valuable method of identification. Perhaps it is not necessary even to mention, but there were notable exceptions, although very few, on the part of individual teachers where this was not true. There were also certain children in the County who were identified repeatedly by teacher judgment with the error clearly being made because of the attainments of their parents and relatives.

Teacher judgment can be a valuable technique for identifying gifted children, if other measures are also used in order to avoid including isolated cases who do not belong, as well as identifying isolated cases who were for one reason or another not included. Clear statement of the purposes of the specific program greatly aids teachers in making identification of those children who would best fit into the program.

Use of Children's Judgment

The use of children's judgment as to which children within that group are gifted offers great possibilities. There was no attempt made in the Portage County Project to have gifted children identified by their peer group with the instructions that they were to identify other gifted children. Until there is more refinement of the expression "giftedness", and children and teachers themselves are more aware of the implication of giftdness, such a direct approach hardly seems wise. An attempt in one of the programs was made to have children participate in the identification process, however. In much the same way that the teachers were

asked to identify those children who would fit into a particular type of program best, so were children asked. In this situation children's judgment was found to be equal to that of teachers' judgment, but no better than the teachers' judgment. The same number of errors, although of a different type, were made both by teachers and children. Where the teachers erred for inclusion on the part of those children from what might be called atypical situations in a positive way, the children did not make a similar error. For example, where the teacher included incorrectly the child from the highest economic level, the children did not make this error. The children erred by excluding certain "favored" children who were found to belong. At the other end of the scale, the teachers erred by omitting certain children from the less "favored' group, while the children had a tendency to err in favor of including such children. The teachers had a tendency to be correct by including certain children from "favored' background, while the children were more successful in including certain children who belonged in the group from what might be described as less "favorable" background.

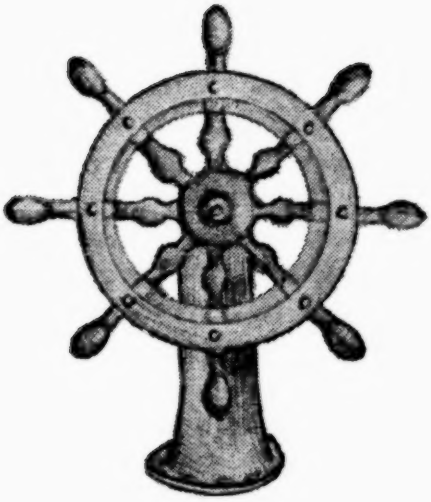
Children's Judgment of Their Own Potential

Indeed it would be improper and perhaps unsuccessful to ask children directly to identify themselves as gifted. Using another approach, however, much of the same thing is accomplished. In the section on creative writing, it was assumed that only those who really could be successful in creative writing would be the children who had already mastered certain basic skills of writing sufficiently so that they had an interest in doing more of it would be interested in attending. Classes were established on an after school basis, open to all children who were interested in developing creative writing skills. Rather than eliminate anyone from the group, samples of writing ability were collected and the children then placed in four separate groups each operating with a different teacher. One group was obviously the most capable, the middle two groups were somewhat similar in ability in writing, and the lower group contained what might have been classified as underachievers, for they were children of limited writing skills in the traditional sense but contained children who had a real "flare' for expression in writing. Interest was obviously the selection factor, but it did provide a means of identifying the more capable children without excluding any child who was sufficiently motivated to participate in the group.

Multiple Approach

Rather than limit identification procedures to any single plan, a variety of methods was used to identify the gifted in Portage County. Regardless of the method used, however, the purpose was to identify those children with high potential who would benefit from specialized educational opportunities. Both group and individual intelligence tests were used, as were standardized achievement test scores. Teacher and peer judgments were used successfully in situations in which the program was planned first, so that descriptions of the program could be given in order that the teachers and children might identify those who, it was believed, would best fit into the program. Self-selection was also used in those programs in which the children were allowed to join a group because of interest in that particular area.

As a result of such diversified methods of identification in Portage County, far more gifted were located than would have been expected. Even those children having "buried" or "hidden" potential were frequently located. The total number located with high scores on an intelligence test far exceeded the expected number for the total population, but this was only a result at the end of the Project. Initially, it was possible to locate only a small number of the expected gifted group. The entire teaching staff of the County became more conscious of the need for early identication, and more skillful in recognizing signs of giftedness.



Teaching

The very purpose of placing gifted children into a classroom together must be examined carefully. There are undoubtedly two distinct benefits to be derived from such placement. The first of these is clearly the benefit derived by associating with other children of similar intellectual potential. The other reason must be because something will occur in the classroom different from what would have happened had the child remained in the regular classroom.

The effect of being with one's intellectual peers cannot be minimized. Particularly at the upper elementary level, where the gifted child is strongly conscious of identication with his peers, it is important that he have some opportunity to identify with his intellectual peers. Failure to provide this opportunity can result in identification with his age peers, which unfortunately stresses physical attainments at a much higher level than intellectual prowess. This is particularly true in rural and semi-rural areas in which the opportunity for cultural activities are limited.

The problems inherent in grouping, expenses involved, possible negative effects resulting from poor attitude on the part of teachers, parents, other children or gifted children themselves, can negate the benefits to be derived from grouping if the only purpose of grouping is to place children with their intellectual peers. Grouping for this purpose alone, while it has distinct advantages, is not sufficient in the view of those engaged in this Project.

The second reason for grouping, that of providing experiences and opportunities for gifted children different from those which they would receive in the regular classroom, must therefore assume a role of major importance. The influence of intellectual peers, as important as it may be, must not stand alone as a reason for establishing classes for gifted children. This therefore clearly indicates that attention to classroom procedures, teaching techniques and materials are vital parts of a gifted program.

Irrespective of how the gifted children are selected, or indeed irrespective of the definition attributed to the label "gifted" (achievement, I.Q., teacher judgment, etc.) if the program is not different from the program that would have been provided in the regular classroom, there is not sufficient justification for special grouping.

Before a discussion of those techniques which are different for regular classes and gifted classes, certain basic principles must be agreed upon. Failure to agree upon certain such principles results in a denial that gifted children are different from other children and therefore indi-

cates that special grouping is not needed. While such listing of common beliefs may differ from one situation to another, the following were used in the Portage County Project as guiding principles by the Supervisors in assisting teachers to work effectively with gifted children.

It is firmly believed that the gifted child has the inner resources necessary to motivate him to seek out needed factual information. This is recognizing that gifted children need most of all to learn to draw from within themselves the needed manner in which a problem is to be solved. This is somewhat in contrast to the more traditional type of teaching in which the teacher provides the information, which the child then memorizes, and parrots back at stated intervals. It is readily recognized that the gifted children have memories better than other children, and will appear to be highly successful in such programs. The basic philosophy should be to teach the child to locate information as opposed merely to seeing how many things he can remember and parrot back.

The teacher's role therefore is changing from one of giving factual information to the children, which presupposes that she knows more about every subject than every child in the classroom, to one in which the teacher assumes the responsibilty of getting information from the children themselves. The philosophy behind this technique is that gifted children can rapidly acquire factual information, either from the teacher or on their own, that the supplying of such so-called factual information is not the primary goal of education, that the teacher cannot possibly hope to know more than all of the children on perhaps any topic, and that gifted children will continue learning throughout their life and should be taught the technique of learning on their own as early as possible.

Since it is obvious that gifted children can go beyond the limitations placed by the usual curriculum guides, text books, teacher information, and even generally accepted knowledge, and have indeed already gone beyond many of these in individual instances, it must be apparent that a different approach must be taken to teaching gifted children than that taken in teaching children in the regular class. This approach must not be merely presenting more material, quantitatively, than that for average children. While the gifted child is capable of memorizing more material quantitatively, there is ample evidence that little is retained after a period of time when material is learned in such a fashion. Merely giving gifted students more of the same cannot be justified.

It is also important to decide if the philosophy is to be one of ac-

celeration. The Portage County Project has stressed enrichment, as opposed to acceleration, in all of its programs. There has been no attempt to teach skills at a grade level above that in which the child would ordinarily be placed. It is recognized that acceleration may be necessary at higher levels, and perhaps in certain areas, but it was felt that there was ample room for enrichment without acceleration in the Portage County Schools, and that this same situation prevailed in many other school situations. The use of acceleration, without consideration of the fact that these children have already mastered many of the skills at a grade level two years beyond that in which they were already placed, clearly indicates the absurdity of thinking that their particular needs are being met merely by placing them at a grade higher, or by using textbooks of a higher grade level.

With this adoption of a philosophy of enrichment, as opposed to acceleration, it is necessary to define enrichment as differentiated instruction, both in techniques, materials and evaluation, from that generally used in the regular classroom. Enrichment does not mean the absence of skill instruction, but incorporates those activities over and above the usual skills program. It is not merely the addition of material which would otherwise not be presented, but includes such qualitative factors as more insight into problems and their development, sensitivity to the importance of particular items, an examination of trends and their importance in historical and literary works, recognition of one's potential ability and the development of responsibility for the utilization of this ability, and escape from the traditional fears associated in being different from other children.

Material must be presented to children in such a way so that they are not being asked merely to remember what someone else has said or done in a particular situation. Instead, gifted children need to be taught to develop an inquiring mind, always asking "Why?", as each area is explored. The expression "critical thinking" perhaps best describes this goal.

Selection of Teachers

The importance of selecting the proper teacher for a class of gifted children is paramount. Irrespective of the pre-planning, methods of identification (either I.Q. tests, achievement tests, combination of both, teacher recommendations, etc.), and all other factors except the provid-

ing of support and assistance of a supervisor skilled in teaching techniques for the gifted, selection of the proper teacher is the most important factor.

Selection of teachers for classes of gifted children who were most successful in the Portage County Project either began with or followed these steps: (1) expressed interest in teaching gifted children, (2) highly respected for their teaching ability in regular classroom, (3) interest in teaching gifted children at a sufficiently high level to be willing to attend college classes in the specialized area. Without exception the least successful teachers were unable to find the time to attend college classes, while the most successful teachers (although their apparent responsibilities were greater than the other teachers) attended college and took a minimum of two separate courses pertaining to gifted children, (4) a sincere interest in receiving supervisory assistance in order to become better teachers of the gifted.

These four steps might logically be used in the selection of teachers for gifted programs: (1) demonstrated teaching ability with regular classroom, (2) expressed personal interest in teaching the gifted, (3) willingness to attend training classes, and (4) receptive to supervisory assistance. While it must certainly be recognized that merely receiving the training does not assure that the teacher will be successful with gifted children, nor does merely having an interest in working with the gifted children assure success, these two factors coupled with demonstrated success in the regular classroom seem to provide the best possible guide for selecting teachers of the gifted.

Supervisory Services for the Gifted

The dearth of provisions for the gifted at the inception of the Project was neither accidental nor deliberate. It merely reflected the usual situation characteristic of the many schools across the country wherein teachers have no special training or experience in working with the gifted (or slow learners either) and usually cater to the average student. It was both logical and necessary, therefore, to lay the groundwork for program development through in-service education.

One phase of in-service education started in the autumn of 1960 when the gifted program received an immeasurable boost through its workshop on the gifted. This workshop probably did more to further the program during those early months than anything else that was done.

It helped to fasten the attention of the county teachers upon the goal of the program as well as serve as an opportunity for them to learn more about the gifted child movement that was sweeping the country.

While it was not possible to measure with precision the effect of the workshops on the Portage County Project, it was apparent that they did much to help get the program underway and later extend it into a relatively unexplored area. School systems about to undertake similar programs would do well to utilize the workshop approach to in-service education provided they obtain highly qualified speakers and/or consultants.

Another phase of the project, the purpose of which was to lay the groundwork for program development through in-service education, was speeches to various groups including teachers, administrators, and laymen. During the course of the Portage County Gifted Program, nearly every P.T.A., every school staff, several boards of education, and various other community groups requested one or more of the Project personnel to participate in meetings concerned with some aspect of the gifted child.

These talks and consultant services helped in many ways. They aided in orienting parents and other people in the community as well as the teachers and administrators. Also, in some instances, they were the means of working out policies with boards of education for a structured program for the gifted.

More supervisory time was spent in conferences, visitations, and demonstrations than any other activity. Usually the conferences were with teachers and/or administrators, but sometimes parents were also involved.

In the initial stage of the project, conferences played a vital role in ascertaining the receptiveness of teachers and administrators to various types of programs for the gifted as well as provided an opportunity to develop rapport, and to become acquainted with the school systems. Initial teacher visits were helpful in identifying those teachers who seemed to possess the traits needed for teaching gifted children.

After teachers had been selected, demonstrations were frequently used in training to work with the gifted. Of course, at this stage of development, conferences took on another function: that of discussing objectives and methods before and after demonstrations. Frequent visits were made to keep abreast of progress that was being made and difficulties that were encountered for which "outside assistance" was needed.

Research

The major purpose of the Portage County Project was to demonstrate what could be done on the county level for gifted elementary school children. Although the project was primarily a demonstration of techniques, an opportunity was offered to make a variety of research studies. The basic idea that such a project could be successful was clearly evidenced by the increased attention to the gifted, permanent provisions for their identification and education and the changes in attitudes toward the gifted.

Studies were made of teachers', pupils', parents' and administrators' evaluations of the programs which were established for the gifted. Achievement tests scores were recorded. Teachers' information and attitudes toward gifted children were determined at the beginning of the Project and at the end of the Project two years later. Teachers' ratings of behavior and personality characteristics of the gifted children in their classes are reported. Vocational concepts and career choice requirements were studied. The selection of friends by gifted children in special classes was given careful attention. Other areas were also studied but either could not be continued, or have not yet been completed. Detailed reports of each of these studies will be available at a later date.

Evaluation of Program By Gifted Children

It is logical to assume that children in a gifted class should be in an excellent position to evaluate the class itself. The very fact that the children are gifted, which indicates a perceptiveness, and the fact that they are in a special program, places them in a position to give information which will be valuable in programming their education. As might be expected the children reacted highly favorably to the gifted class and would like to see the class continued permanently. Interestingly enough, however, there was a slightly, although insignificantly, more favorable reaction by the parents than by the gifted children. The children reacted very favorably to the class, and wanted to see it continued. They wanted to participate in this type of class next year, believed in grouping children into classes by ability, felt that their parents were satisfied, and were satisfied with their own performance in the class, felt that they had a high degree of advantage by being in the class and that their attitude towards those not in the class was favorable.

The children in classes of the gifted, numbering over 150 in all, generally felt that being a member of this special class had made little change in their relationships with their friends. There were more who noted that it had a very favorable effect on their relationships with their friends, but there was a small number who noted that there was a very unfavorable effect. Breaking these figures down by sex seemed to indicate that the boys found being a member of this special class affected their relationships with their friends more favorably. There was, however, one class in which this finding was completely reversed.

Evaluation of Program By Parents of The Gifted

Reactions to programs for the gifted have rarely included the attitudes of parents whose children are in such programs. A major part of the Project, which was in operation for a two year period, was the development of attitudes toward the gifted. This included numerous meetings with teachers and parents explaining the need for the development of the gifts of children and the development of responsibility within the children themselves. No pressure was placed upon parents to have their children included in the program, nor was there any yielding to pressure of parents to include children who had not been otherwise selected. Reports were received from over 250 parents of children in special classes for gifted children.

The reaction of the parents to the program was highly favorable, with strong approval of the statement that they would like to see the program continued permanently. Parents perhaps rated the program more favorably than did any other group. The only major discrepancy noted between the reports of the parents and teachers was the almost unanimous agreement by teachers of classes for the gifted that some term other than gifted should be used, while the parents favored rather strongly the continuation of the use of the word gifted.

The parents felt that there was a slight favorable change in their child's adjustment to children of his own age as a result of having been in the gifted class. The parents of children in gifted classes more strongly felt that the class had aided favorably the adjustment of their children to school. In every instance the parents felt that the attitude of those

children not in the program was either not changed or changed in a favorable way. No question elicited a more wide-spread difference of opinion than the one directed to parents of children in the gifted program asking them how they thought the program had affected the attitude of those parents who did not have children in the program. Although the majority, in every instance, felt that there was no change, there was an awareness on the part of the parents whose children were in the program that parents who did not have children in the program may have had some justifiable concerns.

Separation of the evaluations of mothers and fathers of children in special classes for the gifted children yielded no significant difference to any of the questions except the question which asked them on a five point scale to "agree highly" down to "disagree highly" to the statement "the most neglected child at your child's school is the gifted." In every school the mothers neither agreed nor disagreed that the gifted child was the most neglected, but the fathers in every school disagreed with the statement that the child was neglected. This may only be a reflection of the fathers unfamiliarity with school problems, or may actually reflect a strong attitude or area of disagreement.

Evaluation of Program By Teachers of Gifted Classes

It has generally been found that teachers of classes of gifted children favor this method of providing for the gifted. The very selection of teachers for such classes probably predetermines the types of responses which they will give. Rather than rely on a single question to indicate the attitude of the teachers, 14 questions were asked dealing with various phases of the gifted class. Teachers of gifted classes reacted favorably to the gifted program at their school and would like to see it continued. They felt that there was no particular advantage for the children in the special class over those in the same grade in the regular class, that the gifted child was not particularly neglected at their school and that the parents of the children in the program were accepting of the program but not extremely favorable or unfavorable toward it. The strongest reaction of the teachers of the classes of the gifted was to questions concerning the continuation of the program, to which they reacted very favorably, and the unanimous agreement that some term other than gifted should be used for the children in this program.

Teachers for the classes of the gifted felt that the program favorably affected the adjustment of the gifted children to their age mates in a much higher percentage than did administrators or regular teachers. Also, the teachers of classes for the gifted felt that the gifted program had changed the adjustment to school of the children in the program to a higher degree than did administrators or regular teachers, and to a higher degree than did most parents. They agreed with administrators that the attitude of those children not in the program was neither highly favorable nor unfavorable, and that the attitudes of those teachers not on the program was slightly less favorable. Teachers of classes of the gifted were apparently good judges of the attitudes of other teachers, for their rating of the opinion of other teachers' attitudes closely parallel that of other teachers.

Evaluation of Program By Teachers of Regular Classes

Of major concern to a number of researchers has been the attitudes of teachers of regular classes in buildings in which there are special classes for gifted children. Although some studies have indicated disapproval of the special classes by teachers of regular classes, this was not found in those schools in Portage County in which there were special classes. On a series of 14 questions designed to determine the attitudes of regular teachers toward the program of special classes for gifted children in their school, on a five point scale ranging from "highly favorable" to "highly unfavorable", there was almost consistent marking of the mid-point between the two extremes. This would indicate perhaps the need for more information about the program being provided for teachers in the regular classes, but clearly indicates no particular opposition toward the program itself.

Evaluation of Program By Administrators

The attitudes of administrators in schools in which gifted programs existed closely parallel that of teachers of the classes of the gifted. This indicated a general approval of the program, but not "blind" acceptance of all phases of it. There was obviously a recognition by administrators that there were some problems connected with the operation of special

classes for the gifted, but they apparently felt that the benefits derived from such classes outweighed the problems.

Achievement Test Scores

Many questions can be raised concerning achievement when gifted children are grouped into special classes. Because of the enriched nature of the curriculum, there has frequently been raised the question as to whether or not the children master basic skill subjects. It must be recognized that the purpose of special classes for gifted children is not primarily merely to offer more of the same type of subject matter or material, but rather to enrich the offering. Opponents of special classes have frequently attempted to cite achievement test scores as proof that children in gifted classes do not master basic skills.

There were six special classes of gifted children established in Portage County. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Forms I and II, were administered to all of the children in special classes during the 1961-62 school year. This test consists of five parts: Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Language Skills, Work-Study Skills, and Arithmetic Skills.

It must be pointed out that because gifted children are already achieveing at such a high level on standardized measures of achievement, it is frequently difficult to measure gains because of the low ceiling of such tests. Almost all of the children have reached the ceiling on at least one of the tests. Consequently, when the success of special classes for gifted children is judged solely on the basis of standardized achievement tests, the progress which the children have made in the special classes frequently does not appear as spectacular as some people would expect.

All of the children in special classes were tested during the Fall of 1961. At this time, using the mean grade equivalents, the children scored close to two years above their grade placement in each of the sub-tests on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Retesting at the end of the school year indicated a superority of over two years in grade placement. This was particularly true in the vocabulary and language skills, in which there was as much as three year's excess in some of the classes. The greatest changes upward were noted among the older students in classes which contained more than a single grade.

There is clear evidence that, in spite of the fact that gifted children are penalized on standardized achievement tests because of the low

ceilings of the tests, in the classes in Portage County the children achieved in the basic skills, and in particular in the language areas, at the same or at a higher rate than they had achieved in the regular classroom.

Teacher's Attitudes and Information

In the Fall of 1960 a questionnaire was distributed to all of the elementary school teachers in grades one through eight in Portage County schools. In addition to obtaining basic information about the teachers training, background and experience, the questionnaire contained forty statements to be marked with a plus if the teacher agreed with the statement and a minus if she disagreed.

The forty questions were divided evenly between information questions and attitude questions. Each of the twenty questions were then divided into the area of (1) identification, (2) characteristics (3) definition, and (4) educational provisions. At the end of the Project, in the Spring of 1962, questionnaires were again distributed to all Portage County teachers in elementary grades who had been teaching in Portage County and had completed a questionaire in the Fall of 1960.

The purpose of this inventory was to determine the changes in attitude and information during the period of the Project. In addition to a great deal of information indicating changes in attitudes and information toward the gifted, it was clear that the goal of broadening the definition of the gifted beyond merely a high I.Q. was achieved. The belief that gifted children would be provided for only through administrative devices was changed from 68 per cent in the first questionnaire to 45 per cent in the second. Only one respondent favored grade-skipping as the first choice as a means of providing for gifted in the first questionnaire and none listed it in the second. Enrichment of the regular classroom increased in favor. Approximately 30 per cent listed enrichment on the first questionnaire while 54 per cent listed it on the second. Considering all three choices, the movement from the first questionnaire to the second questionnaire concerning the method of providing for gifted children clearly indicated a significant shift from special classes to enrichment in the regular class. Since this is obviously the method by which most gifted children will have to be provided for, the responsibility of the classroom teacher to recognize that it is her responsibility to make these provisions and not merely an administrative decision which establishes the special class is viewed as a favorable trend.

Teacher Rating of Behavior and Personality Characteristics of Gifted Children

In duplicating an earlier study on the adjustment of gifted children in the regular classroom, teachers in Portage County were asked to rate gifted children on nine behavior and personality characteristics. There was a wide discrepancy between the rating of gifted children in the regular classroom and the rating of gifted children in a special class. This would be expected, for the teacher of the regular classroom when rating a bright or gifted child would necessarily compare him with average and below average children. In the special class, the teacher would be comparing him with other bright children.

It has been found that the bright child in the regular classroom excelled in all areas except creativity and leadership. Making an arbitrary adjustment for the fact that the children in the present study were in gifted classes, the teachers' rating indicated a high level of creativity for the children in the Portage County classes but not a high degre of leadership. This clearly indicates the need for more attention to the study of leadership and its development for gifted children, both in the regular classroom and in the special class.

Goals And Aspirations

In an attempt to determine the vocational concepts of gifted children and of their parents for them, an inventory was distributed to all children enrolled in special classes and their parents. An attempt was made to determine vocational goals, both specific and general ones, their values and their educational aspirations.

A surprisingly large number of children rated that it was only fairly important to them personally to get ahead in life, although the majority rated this as very important. With respect to a choice between being independent, successful or well-liked, although each of the three was marked by many children, being well-liked seemed to be preferred. This may only have been an indication of the children's youth. There was some uncertainty on the part of the children as to whether or not they prefer to make decisions for themselves or to have them made for them. Although the children indicated that if they had ample time and money they would prefer advanced college training, their actual plans seem to

indicate less advanced education. Surprisingly enough, a large number of the children expected their future standard of living to be about the same as that of their parents.

The parents, both mothers and fathers, rated it was more important for their child to get ahead in life far more highly than did the children themselves. The parents also differed from their children in the rating of whether they would prefer to be independent, successful or well-liked. Where the children rated well-liked as the most important, the parents, both mothers and fathers, rated being successful as more important. Mothers rated being independent much more highly than did fathers. There was still a surprisingly large number, approximately one-third of both mothers and fathers, who preferred that their children be well-liked than that they be successful or independent.

Career Choice Requirements Of Gifted Children

The following statement was given to (1) children in gifted classes, and (2) parents of children in gifted classes: "Consider to what extent a job or career would have to satisfy each of these requirements before you would consider it ideal". Ten statements were then made concerning the requirements for an ideal job or career.

Responses of 156 gifted children and 263 responses of parents of gifted children were collected. Parents felt that the ideal requirement would be "provide an opportunity to use my special abilities or aptitudes," while the children themselves selected as the most important "give me an opportunity to be helpful to others." Gifted children and their parents listed among their top three both of these stated above as well as "enable me to look forward to a stable, secure future." The parents and children differed in the order of which they considered most important, both groups listing as second most important "enable me to look forward to a stable, secure future." First and third rankings were reversed between the group of gifted children and the group of parents.

This seems to indicate that there is a discrepancy between the vocational values held by gifted children and the vocational values held by their parents. While it would perhaps be debatable, one of the goals of education seems to be being met with respect to the children. Of course, age of the children might account for the obtained differences although it would be hoped that this is not true.

Selection of Friends

One hundred thirteen students from gifted classes and 175 students from regular classes in the same schools were asked to select their three best friends and state whether their friends were in the same class, the same school, or from another school. This influence of the special class on their selection of friends has been the basis of a number of studies. It has been hypothesized that by placing children in gifted classes selection of their friends has been adversely affected. Research has not supported this hypothesis.

By comparing the percentages of gifted children and regular children who chose their friends from the same class, the same schools and other schools, it was thought that there would be a clear indication whether or not placement into a special class affected where their friends were chosen from. Fifty-eight per cent of the gifted children and 64 per cent of the children in regular classes selected their friends from the class in which they were enrolled. There was no statistical significance to this difference. Twenty-three per cent of the children in gifted classes, as opposed to 24 per cent of the children in regular classes, selected their friends from the same school. Again, there was no statistical signifiance to this difference. Nineteen per cent of the children in the gifted classes and 12 per cent of the children in regular classes selected their friends from other schools. This is a statistically significant difference.

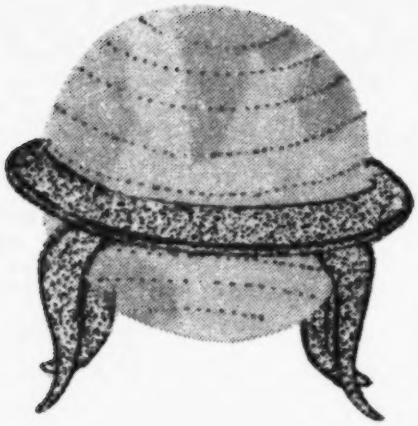
This would appear to indicate clearly that the placement of children in special classes in no way influenced the pattern by which they selected their friends. It undoubtedly influenced them in their selection of friends in the same classroom, because the classroom was homogeneously grouped. Believing that proximity is an important factor, a study of the intelligence levels of the friends selected by these children would undoubtedly indicate that they tended to select other bright children as their friends.

Other Areas Being Investigated

In addition to those areas already mentioned as being studied, certain other concomitant studies are under way. A Thinking Experience Test has been administered to 26 matched pairs of gifted children in special classes and in regular classes. Tentative findings seem to indicate a significant difference between the two groups, with more "fanciful

thinking" by those children in the special classes. The use of flow charts as a method of determining effectiveness of classroom discussions has also been tentatively explored. An attempt has been made to determine dependence and independence among the gifted and the average. Teachers were asked to select the six most dependent and independent children in their class. A comparison was then made between the ratings and the test results. A beginning has been made in determining the effectiveness of teachers' ratings of children who would be identified as gifted, pupils judgment of gifted children from among their own peer group and test results.

The research studies which can result from such a program are endless. The total summation of all the studies conducted once again points out that programs for gifted children can be successful under almost any conditions if the teacher is one who can work successfully with bright children. The program itself is not the most important factor, although careful planning of the program, identification of the children, organization of the program and teacher-parent communications can greatly aid the effectiveness of the teacher.



Summary

As a result of a two year demonstration project for gifted children in a county system certain generalizations can be made. Certainly, not all will apply to all situations. Essentially, however, the following statements summarize the findings of the Portage County Project for Gifted Children.

1. The classroom teacher is the key to a successful program for gifted children. Not all "good" teachers are equally effective with gifted children. Being a good teacher with a regular class does not guarantee success as a teacher of gifted children, but it certainly should be one of the requirements.
2. A clear statement of specific goals should precede establishment of any special program for the gifted. Only if such goals have been clearly stated can children be properly identified for the program, the lessons be planned and the program evaluated.
3. No single plan for providing for the needs of gifted children is practical on a county-wide basis.
4. The effectiveness of an all-county workshop in the initial stages of developing programs for the gifted on a county basis with informative and inspirational leadership is a major factor in the ensuing success of the program.
5. In schools where recognition of students has been based almost solely on athletic prowess, difficulty in establishing programs for the more capable learners has been experienced.
6. When the prime purpose of initiating a gifted child program in a school is that of receiving recognition for academic achievement; e.g., National Spelling Bee and National Merit Scholarship Tests; the development of such a program is adversely affected.
7. As specific teachers were assisted in developing those techniques and methods applicable to the instruction of more capable children, schools moved in the direction of wanting to provide special classes for these children because of the security of having trained teacher personnel.
8. In establishing a program for gifted children, there is such a need for testing services that there must be a strong psychological staff—stronger than many counties may have.
9. The turnover of teaching personnel in a county adds to the difficulty of providing programs for the gifted. After a teacher

has been trained, it is not uncommon for him to move into a larger school system where remuneration is higher and the opportunities for advancement are greater.

10. Early admissions of students to kindergarten and first grade needs to be considered as a means of providing for gifted children.

11. To unify the county, to disseminate information, and to distribute data and duplicated material, a teacher should be appointed as the coordinator in each building. Coordinators should meet with the county staff regularly.

12. It is easier to develop an interest in and justify special provisions for the gifted in schools where programs for slow learners are already in existence. The development of slow learner programs and gifted programs concurrently seems to be a practical alternative, if slow learner programs do not already exist.

13. Developing programs for gifted children in one district tends to foster interest in the gifted and a desire to develop similar programs in neighboring districts.

14. When conflict exists between administrative personnel within a school, there is difficulty in establishing any type of gifted child program.

15. Clear differentiation between the role of district boards of education and the administrative staff of a school in the development of the gifted program needs to be established.

16. Encouragement of teachers to join the Ohio Association of the Gifted is desirable and creates interest in the local program.

17. The development of an effective special program for the gifted provides community support by leading people for the school administration.

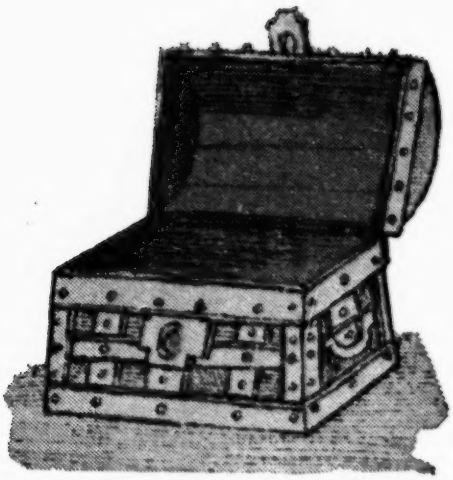
18. Program planning, without major emphasis on teaching techniques and special teacher qualifications, can result in ineffective programs.

19. Program planning should precede identification, in order that procedures of identification will select children in terms of what the program is to offer.

20. The selection of children for a special program serves a number of valuable services. In addition to alerting all teachers to the presence of gifted children within the school, being selected also serves to motivate the children in their regular class work.

21. Such factors as the physical facilities where gifted children meet, the frequency with which they meet, and whether they meet during the school day or after school appear to be of less importance than the more valuable benefit that ability is recognized.

22. Pupil and teacher judgment of children who would be successful in a particular type program is a valuable addition to group test data, even when individual intelligence test scores are used as the criterion for admission.



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